



File Code: 1950

Date: October 31, 2002

Dear Friend of the Chugach National Forest:

The Forest Service wants to hear from you! The Chugach National Forest is requesting comments regarding two proposals received from Chugach Powder Guides, Inc. (CPG). CPG is requesting authorization for continuance of a helicopter supported skiing operation on the Glacier and Seward Ranger Districts of the Chugach National Forest. Please refer to the attached maps for clarification on proposed use areas (ski zones). All zones are within areas open to helicopter use per the *Chugach Revised Land and Resource Management Plan, dated May 2002*.

PROPOSAL #1 - One-Year Special Use Permit (December 15, 2002 – April 20, 2003)

The proposed action involves permitting guided helicopter skiing in the following *Core Zones*: Glacier/Winner Creek, West Twentymile, North Twentymile, East Twentymile, Placer/Skookum (subject to the April 1st closure to motorized use in Skookum), Bench Peak, and Grandview. *Exploratory Zones* include Seattle Creek, Moose Creek, and Ptarmigan, and will enable the proponent to collect baseline information to determine feasibility. See Proposal #1 map for zone boundaries.

The season of use would be December 15, 2002 through April 20, 2003. It would provide for 1,400 client days, 1,200 client days for *Core Zones* and 200 client days for *Exploratory Zones*. A “client day” is defined as one person on National Forest System land for one day. Twelve groups of 4 people would be supported by 2 helicopters. Both helicopters would be allowed a combined total of 30 landings/takeoffs per day at one or more of the proposed staging areas that include: Girdwood Air Strip, Kern Creek, Big Game Alaska, Ingram Creek, Mile 62 Gravel Pit, Trail Lake, and Lawing Air Strip. The Mile 62 Gravel Pit is the only staging area located on the Chugach National Forest. Additional landings/takeoffs would occur within each ski zone.

A one-year permit will enable CPG to operate in the 2002/2003 season, while the analysis for Proposal #2 is in progress.

PROPOSAL # 2 - Five-Year Special Use Permit (December 15, 2003 – April 21, 2008)

The proposed action involves permitting guided helicopter skiing in the following *Core Zones*: Glacier/Winner Creek, West Twentymile, North Twentymile, East Twentymile, Placer/Skookum Valleys, Bench Peak, and Grandview. *Exploratory Zones* requested are Seattle Creek, Moose Creek, Ptarmigan, Snow River, and Mount Ascension. See Proposal #2 map.

Proposed use is 2,400 client days, 1,800 client days for *Core Zones* and 600 client days for *Exploratory Zones*. Season of use would be December 15, 2003 through April 21, 2008.



Three helicopters would support 12 groups of 4 people, and allowed a total of 30 landings/takeoffs per day, for all 3 helicopters at one or more of the staging areas mentioned in Proposal #1. Additional landings/takeoffs would occur within each ski zone.

You may submit your comments regarding CPG's proposals by close of business, **November 29, 2002**, by mail to the attention of Teresa Paquet, Glacier Ranger District, P.O. Box 129, Girdwood, Alaska 99587, or by e-mail to tpaquet@fs.fed.us, or by Fax to 907-783-2094. Include your name, address, telephone number, document title (i.e., Response to Proposal #1), and specific facts or comments and supporting reasons to be considered by the responsible decision making official.

Sincerely,

/S/ JAMES M. FINCHER

JAMES M. FINCHER
District Ranger

/S/ PATRICK J. O'LEARY (for)

MICHAEL R. KANIA
Seward District Ranger